

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CTME-00	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00
PDI-00	DS-00	EUR-00	EXIM-01	E-00	VCI-00	FRB-00	
H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	MOFM-00	MOF-00	
M-00	VCIE-00	NRC-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	OES-00	OMB-00	
NIMA-00	PM-00	SCT-00	ISNE-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	SSO-00	
SS-00	STR-00	NCTC-00	BBG-00	IIP-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 000739

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2019

TAGS: AJ ENRG IR KZ PREL TX RU

SUBJECT: THE AQTAU SUMMIT: MUCH TO DO ABOUT NOTHING

REF: BAKU 693

Classified By: Charge Donald Lu, for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov told Eurasian Energy Senior Advisor Daniel Stein that the September 11 Caspian Summit (minus Iran) in Aqtau was "short, informal and not exclusively about Caspian delimitation." Khalafov attended the Summit, but was not in the 90-minute informal meeting between the four presidents. He was out in the hall with Russian Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Sergei Prikhodka and Kazakh officials. He said the presidents had their meeting, gave brief statements, then the Azerbaijani side immediately went home. The Kazakhs urged them to stay for additional bilateral meetings with the Kazakhs and Turkmen, but President Aliyev had a busy schedule and had to depart. "It was a lot of travel for an hour and a half meeting," he complained.

¶2. (C) He said that only two decisions had been taken. They reiterated their position that Caspian delimitation should be solved with Iran. They also reconfirmed the decision of the Tehran Summit in 2007 that the next summit of the five littoral states should be in Baku. Khalafov said that because of Iranian sensitivities, they were jokingly referring to this as "a meeting of states close to the Russian Federation."

¶3. (C) Asked how the tone of the interaction was between Turkmen President Berdimuhamedov and Azeri President Aliyev given recent tensions, Khalafov replied that this was an interesting issue. "There should not be a great change in the tone of negotiations," he continued. Foreign Minister Mammadyarov later told Stein that the tone of the discussions with the Turkmen President was actually good. Khalafov noted that bilateral talks were continuing. On November 5, the Turkmen will host a working-level discussion between the five littoral states. On the margins of that meeting, Khalafov expected to continue Azeri-Turkmen bilateral negotiations. Moreover, there remains an invitation for President Aliyev to visit Ashgabat, but no date has been decided. Finally, Turkmenistan is invited to participate in a Conference of Turkic Peoples in Nakchivan, Azerbaijan on October 2. Kazakh President Nazarbayev is planning to attend.

¶4. (C) Comment: If the Deputy Foreign Minister knew something interesting about the Summit, he was cagey about discussing it. In discussions with the President preceding the Summit, President Aliyev was skeptical about Russian intentions in promoting the meeting. The brief presidential

meeting and the Azeri rejection of follow-on consultations, suggests either a cautious, minimalist engagement by the Azeris or a complete meltdown during the informal meeting and a walkout. In the press photos of the event the presidents look stiff, but not particularly hostile.

¶5. (C) Senior Advisor Stein was not able to review this cable.

LU